

Private

(For Brigham Young only and his immediate advisers)

Philadelphia, Septem. 24. 1850.

My friends,

I write to you in haste, because I want to have it in my power to send in the mail with the letter I wrote the night before my departure, for the sea shore, one that will qualify it and assure you that I am not only yet alive at this date, but greatly improved in health, and quite likely to live, if only to swell the chapter of Mormon miracles.

I told you of my critical condition of last winter. It was at the period of my worst haemorrhage that I found myself called upon by the rising of the fresh batch of calumnies of the William Smith co-partnership, to get up something special for the troublesome people at Washington; and, instead of pursuing my usual course of bringing out our different seaboard newspapers, to edit something of a less fugitive nature. I found that my editorials, however labored, had always to be renewed on an average at least once in the quarter. The minds of general readers were fatigued too, with the iteration of the same points of argument, necessarily unavoidable within the limits of a leaded column. Opinion besides, seemed ripe

for something narrative and fanciful that would challenge attention and carry its pleading by implication; and, my illness itself, admonished me of the expediency of recording facts in a sufficiently permanent form to serve as a reliable base of defence, after I should be carried off the field. So I accepted the first eligible invitation to deliver a Lecture that I received from a Literary Society, stipulating that I would name my subject after my discourse was written, and set to work to write them one. I gave myself four weeks: I was full of my subject, but suffered so much from pain and weakness as to be unable the major part of the time to hold a pen in my hand. However at d' I went, in spite of the entreaties of my friends and family who thought me beside myself, and, if, through acute illness, I did miss any one day, the night found me on hand, getting up in my bed over a foot bath of hot water maybe, with a kettle of strong tea to my hand, and a towel soaked in brandy round my forehead, scratching away when my house was quit and its inmates in their sleep, trying to remember this remote incident or recall that half forgotten fact or drowsy anecdote, and then striving so to weave these all into my narrative, as to give the whole not only a truthful but a light and good humored air, something such as old Grimaldi the clown put on when he took care to dance with most spirit when his gout was

at its worst. I was done before my time, and, true to my engagement, had myself carried to the Lecture Hall before my audience assembled, and came out upon them with "The Mormons". Having taken a strong drug to diminish the action of the heart and circulation, (and being, as I am superstitious enough to believe, spiritually sustained,) I was able to speak forty minutes by the watch without hemorrhage. But, after it was over, it seemed all over with me;— I fainted away before I reached home, and, for days after, was so prostrated as hardly to be able to move in bed. Yet, again I rallied;— and enough to correct the proofs and perform other labor upon Two Editions which I put through the press, (*) though by the Medical men this was thought the struggle of a moribund and nothing more.

Now mark the change. The Second Thousand through, I left my other work to take care of itself and went off to Newport. From that moment as if it was a signal given, my health seemed to undergo a change. My most sanguine anticipation was that I should perhaps be able to recruit strength enough to make it safe for me to visit the West

(*) It is contrary to my rule to print anything of literary pretension over my signature, and I embraced this opportunity of expressing to some of you my regard. I hope therefore you have received the copies sent you by mail of the Pamphlet form.

Indies in the winter. I have so recruited that I do not think I shall need to go to the West Indies, at all. What the Doctors say, I do not care; I know that my cough has left me, and my Ague too, and that I have strength enough to return to my business and work at it with ability. If I can lighter my tasks, a little ease and attention to health will very probably restore me permanently, and even invite for me all the blessings my good old friend the Patriarch invoked upon my head.

I have just returned from Washington, where I was called immediately after my return from New-York, to use my influence with Mr. Fillmore in favor of the nominations for Utah. Dr. Bernhisel has promised me to give you the details of this as well as your other affairs of the same kind, and I have only therefore to give weight to his statements, by expressing my regret that your interests should have suffered by the improper conduct of Mr. A. W. Babitt. It was incumbent upon me, however before this occurrence, to advise you against again returning Mr. Babitt as your Delegate. Until Deseret is admitted into the Union, I

[Sep 24 1850]

would not be thought exacting as to the qualifications of her representative, but he should at least be of correct deportment, discreet, and of good report, that those who point to him and say, "there goes a Mormon," may find marked their approval of his religion. The Delegate, as a sort of Ambassador, is commonly taken as the specimen man of his constituency; if he cannot do good, if he is either ashamed of his Religion or a shame to it, he can do much harm. In politics, too, if he cannot pursue a wise neutrality, (which at least during the present strange confusion of party lines I strongly counsel) he should at all events be a man whose instincts will teach him to be a trusty supporter of his single party and nice in his choice of the associates that belong to it. Otherwise, he will have personal influence with neither party, and gain not strength but only dependency from the relations he cultivates. A particular reason for the detention of Mr. Babbitt, you will find in the fact that his conduct has lost for him the confidence of both parties. The Democrats joined with the Whigs in the personal disrespect which was shown him in the House.

It pains me so much to speak upon this point, that you must let me add that this is the first instance I have ever known of

faithlessness or shortcoming on the part of your agents. I desire it to be recorded to your honor, that throughout my entire course of action in your behalf, I have ever only needed to call for the assistance of the authorized members of your church, to be sure of engaging assistants conscientiously prompt active and careful. Of the gentleman, for instance, you fortunately sent to Washington before Mr. Babbitt I have had ample opportunity to prove the worth. Without any previous preparation for political life, and aided only by his own modest good sense and careful purpose to do right, Dr. Berkner has shown himself the equal of every occasion that has offered; while the uniformly upright deportment and gentlemanly demeanour that earned for him his personal influence, were an encomium upon the principles he on no occasion hesitated to avow.

I have to thank you heartily for your presents; so handsome, yet so kindly selected to speak to me of your new home, so far away from my own. The Gold, I had made up into seal rings for the leading friends who have assisted in your vindication, (Horace Greeley & others) reserving first, enough to make three, one for each of the first officers of Deseret, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards, to authenticate the signatures of these my immediate

personal friends, and avow with pride my association with them as such.

Now let me tell you of my disposition of the grand sleigh robe. I am not sure that you have ever heard through the papers of my handsome brother, Surgeon Kane of the Navy, a sort of admirable Crichton, who, bearing the scars of five honorable wounds on his goodly person, still spends his life doing the fine brave things that ladies love and men envy. Having nearly recovered from a bad lance wound received in Mexico, he volunteered, last May, to go upon the expedition in search of Sir John Franklin the gallant Englishman imprisoned in the Polar Ice. He was in the Gulf of Mexico when he received by telegraph from the Naval Department intelligence of their eleventh hour acceptance of his offer. Travelling on, night and day, in eight days after, he was outside Sandy Hook and upon the ocean on his northward way. He had not one days daylight to buy and make up all the clothing and outfit needed for his perilous errand. Furs, an indispensable requisite, he had particular difficulty in obtaining; and I gave him, the robe which had been all winter the ornament of my office in old Independence Hall, with the feeling that it carried a blessing with it. Yet I had compunctions, after doing so, till the other day when a letter was received from him from out of the

Iceberg waters at the head of Baffin's Bay, in which he speaks of it as the greatest comfort of his frozen life. He is pledged to return it, if Providence grants himself to return; and thus it may be only the more honored by being the first missionary of Mormonism to the North Pole.

I have also to thank you for your kind hearted letters, though short, always so fresh and racy and spirited in composition; and for your kind invitation to me to visit the Salt Lake. But the lines have fallen to me in less pleasant places. My heritage is among the mixed oppressors and oppressed (equally unhappy) of an ancient and corrupt Society. I have been born with the gold spoon in my mouth, to station and influence and responsibility, here; and it is here that God means me to administer to these and be holden to account for my stewardship. I shall hardly be forced into conspicuous political life again; but, as I am a Democrat, in fact as well as name, all my sympathies being with the People and their cause, though I have not your faith to spread, I shall aim to be an earnest missionary of Truth and Progress and Reform. It is my fixed belief that our Society must be reformed, or from natural causes, perish. It may be I may find, years hence, that to withstand is merely to impugn and share its ruin, or I may find that the manly pursuit of duty may come to expose me to fruitless persecution or so far deprive me of my popularity and influence with my community as to relieve me of the responsibility which now attaches to me: in any of these cases, my friends, I promise you, I shall seek the sure haven of peaceful Deseret and ask you for a home where I can smile at the angry waves of crime and passion that break in vain outside, against its rocky mountain ramparts.

Write to me, freely; and send me any one to whom I can render service. Believe that you thus please me best, by showing you count upon my affection and know you have a right to call me your friend

Thomas L. Kane